



M/V NEW CARISSA  
Grounding  
North Spit, Oregon  
Unified Command Decision Memo  
16465  
April 19, 1999  
Wreck removal and scuttling

1. The controlled burn of the M/V NEW CARISSA detailed in the Unified Command controlled burn decision dated 10 February 1999 was an unqualified success. The burn eliminated a significant majority of the oils onboard the vessel. Notably, the NEW CARISSA did suffer major structural failure as predicted, breaking in two at fuel oil tank number four, separating the forward two-thirds of the vessel from the after third. However, recent re-ignition attempts have failed to cause additional sustained burns. Consequently, this course of action has exhausted its viability as a method to eliminate the continued significant risk posed by the remaining oil onboard.
2. We continue to have major concerns for wildlife and associated habitats. The continued release of oil, or the industrial operation required to remedy the oil impact, would have a devastating impact throughout the response area. For example, approximately 60% of the Coos Bay north spit Western Snowy Plover population (a threatened species in Oregon) is reported to have already been impacted. Their next nesting season begins in mid March. Wildlife and their associated habitats on the Coos Bay north spit would be significantly impacted through road construction and overland wreck removal activities. Complete obliteration of any new access roads and repair of terrestrial habitats would be required. In addition, removal of the newly built road may be opposed by some in favor of additional access to this sensitive habitat area.
3. Powerful storms continue to affect the area of the NEW CARISSA. The Unified Command, in consultation with the Salvor and others, all agree that left to the ravages of the weather, the NEW CARISSA will continue to suffer catastrophic structural failure. Further, they agree that this failure would certainly result in the simultaneous release of the significant quantity of oil contained within her hull. Numerous lightering proposals were considered. In each case, either the vessel configuration, physical properties of the oil, placement of the vessel, vessel movement, vessel structural conditions, sea and weather conditions and forecasts and vessel conditions resulting from that weather, made removal of the oil from the vessel a less effective or unsafe alternative. Lightering by sea or shore based equipment remains impractical or unsafe. Additional immediate measures must now be taken to protect the environmentally sensitive areas which will be impacted should the M/V NEW CARISSA continue to founder on the beach during the approaching storms.
4. The undersigned concur that the best chance to prevent the near total release of the oil remaining onboard, is to remove the forward two thirds of the vessel which constitutes the most significant threat. Enclosure (1) is the plan to remove this section of the NEW CARISSA. An additional plan will be developed to address the remaining after one-third of the vessel. Bringing the forward section of the vessel into protected waters to be lightered was considered. The same conditions which contribute to the lightering difficulties noted in paragraph three, coupled with the bar closures caused by the continuing series of storms, make this option unsafe and impractical. Enclosure (2) contains the laboratory analysis results of the oil onboard the vessel (not a hazardous waste). Enclosure (3) is the MASS Trajectory Analysis prepared by NOAA. Enclosure (4)

contains documentation provided by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Forestry Service, in consultation with others of the scientific community, detailing their analysis of the situation. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency was consulted, the determination of the Region 10 Ocean Dumping Coordinator was: "that the USCG is in control on-scene and has declared the situation an emergency. In such circumstances, EPA would defer to the USCG so long as prudence and due diligence were exercised (see EPA preferences and generally refer to 40 CFR 229, Scuttling of Vessels). So long as the situation continued as an emergency, no permitting or specific coordination were required, although I [the Region 10 Ocean Dumping Coordinator] requested that they [USCG] call us periodically or if conditions warranted." Enclosure (5) contains related EPA memos. For clarification, the FOSC determination is that the situation remains an emergency.

5. In the final analysis the removal and scuttling of the forward section represents the best achievable solution for the circumstances present.

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Encl: (1) Draft Removal (7 pages)  
(2) Laboratory Analysis of the oil onboard the vessel (15 pages)  
(3) MASS Trajectory Analysis prepared by NOAA (4 pages)  
(4) Scientific Community Documentation (2 pages)  
(5) EPA memos (12 pages)

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